

# Hindi

**Hindi** (Devanagari: हिन्दी, IAST: *Hindi*) or **Modern Standard Hindi** (Devanagari: मानक हिन्दी, IAST: *Mānak Hindi*), is an Indo-Aryan language spoken in India and across the Indian subcontinent. Modern Hindi is the standardised and Sanskritised register<sup>[9]</sup> of the Hindustani language, which itself is based primarily on the Khariboli dialect of Delhi and other nearby areas of Northern India. Hindi, written in the Devanagari script, is one of the two official languages of the Government of India, along with the English language.<sup>[10]</sup> It is one of the 22 scheduled languages of the Republic of India.<sup>[11]</sup> Contrary to the popular belief, Hindi is not the national language of India because no language was given such a status in the Indian constitution.<sup>[12][13]</sup>

Hindi is the *lingua franca* of the *Hindi belt* and to a lesser extent other parts of India (usually in a simplified or pidginised variety such as Bazaar Hindustani or Haflong Hindi).<sup>[14][15]</sup> Outside India, several other languages are recognised officially as "Hindi" but do not refer to the Standard Hindi language described here and instead descend from other dialects of Hindustani, such as Awadhi and Bhojpuri. Such languages include *Fiji Hindi*, which is official in Fiji,<sup>[16]</sup> and Caribbean Hindustani, which is a recognised language in Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana, and Suriname.<sup>[17][18][19][20]</sup> Apart from specialised vocabulary, spoken Hindi is mutually intelligible with standard Urdu, another recognised register of Hindustani.

As a linguistic variety, Hindi is the fourth most-spoken first language in the world, after Mandarin, Spanish and English.<sup>[21]</sup> Alongside Urdu as Hindustani, it is the third most-spoken language in the world, after Mandarin and English.<sup>[22]</sup>

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The word "Hindi" in Devanagari script	
<b>Pronunciation</b>	Hindi pronunciation: ['hindi:]
<b>Native to</b>	India
<b>Region</b>	Northern, Eastern, Western and Central India (Hindi Belt)
<b>Ethnicity</b>	No specific ethnicity or community <sup>[1][2]</sup>
<b>Native speakers</b>	L1 speakers: 322 million speakers of Hindi and various related languages reported their language as 'Hindi' (2011 census) <sup>[3]</sup> L2 speakers: 270 million (2016) <sup>[4]</sup>
<b>Language family</b>	Indo-European <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Indo-Iranian</li> <li>▪ Indo-Aryan</li> <li>▪ Central Zone</li> <li>▪ Khariboli<sup>[5]</sup></li> <li>▪ Hindustani<sup>[5]</sup></li> <li>▪ Hindi</li> </ul>
<b>Early forms</b>	Vedic Sanskrit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Classical Sanskrit</li> </ul>

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## Etymology

The term *Hindī* originally was used to refer to inhabitants of the region east of the Indus. It was borrowed from Classical Persian *Hindī* (Iranian Persian *Hendi*), meaning "Indian", from the proper noun *Hind* ("India").<sup>[23]</sup>

The name *Hindavī* was used by Amir Khusrow in his poetry.<sup>[24][25]</sup>

## History

Like other Indo-Aryan languages, Hindi is a direct descendant of an early form of Vedic Sanskrit, through Sauraseni Prakrit and Śauraseni Apabhraṃśa (from Sanskrit *apabhraṃśa* "corrupt"), which emerged in the 7th century CE.<sup>[26]</sup>

Before the standardisation of Hindi on the Khariboli dialect, various dialects and languages of the Hindi belt attained prominence through literary standardisation, such as Awadhi and Braj Bhasha. Early Hindi literature came about in the 12th and 13th centuries CE. This body of work included the early Rajasthani epics such as renditions of the Dhola Maru, the *Prithviraj Raso* in Braj Bhasha, and the works of Amir Khusrow in the Khariboli of Delhi.<sup>[27][28]</sup>

Modern Standard Hindi is based on the Khariboli dialect,<sup>[26]</sup> the vernacular of Delhi and the surrounding region, which came to replace earlier prestige dialects such as Awadhi, Maithili (sometimes regarded as separate from the Hindi dialect continuum) and Braj. *Urdu* – another form of Hindustani – acquired linguistic prestige in the later Mughal period (1800s), and underwent significant Persian influence. Modern Hindi and its literary tradition evolved towards the end of the 18th century.<sup>[29]</sup> John Gilchrist principally known for his study of the Hindustani language, which led to it being adopted as the lingua franca of northern India (including present-day Pakistan) by British colonists and indigenous people. He compiled and authored *An English-*

Sauraseni Prakrit	▪ Sauraseni Apabhramsa
Sauraseni Apabhramsa	▪ Old Hindi
<b>Writing system</b>	Devanagari Kaithi (historical) Devanagari Braille
<b>Signed forms</b>	Signed Hindi
<b>Official status</b>	
<b>Official language in</b>	 India
<b>Recognised minority language in</b>	 United Arab Emirates <sup>[6]</sup>
<b>Regulated by</b>	Central Hindi Directorate <sup>[7]</sup>
<b>Language codes</b>	
<b>ISO 639-1</b>	hi ( <a href="https://www.loc.gov/standards/iso639-2/php/langcodes_name.php?iso_639_1=hi">https://www.loc.gov/standards/iso639-2/php/langcodes_name.php?iso_639_1=hi</a> )
<b>ISO 639-2</b>	hin ( <a href="https://www.loc.gov/standards/iso639-2/php/langcodes_name.php?code_ID=188">https://www.loc.gov/standards/iso639-2/php/langcodes_name.php?code_ID=188</a> )
<b>ISO 639-3</b>	hin
<b>Linguist List</b>	hin-hin ( <a href="http://multitree.org/codes/hin-hin">http://multitree.org/codes/hin-hin</a> )
<b>Glottolog</b>	hind1269 ( <a href="http://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/hind1269">http://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/hind1269</a> ) <sup>[8]</sup>
<b>Linguasphere</b>	59-AAF-qf

*Hindustani Dictionary, A Grammar of the Hindooostanee Language*, *The Oriental Linguist*, and many more. His lexicon of Hindustani was published in Arabic script, Nāgarī script, and in Roman transliteration. He is also known for his role in the foundation of University College London and for endowing the Gilchrist Educational Trust. In the late 19th century, a movement to further develop Hindi as a standardised form of Hindustani separate from Urdu took form.<sup>[30]</sup> In 1881, Bihar accepted Hindi as its sole official language, replacing Urdu, and thus became the first state of India to adopt Hindi.<sup>[31]</sup> Modern Standard Hindi is one of the youngest Indian languages in this regard.

After independence, the government of India instituted the following conventions:

- standardisation of grammar: In 1954, the Government of India set up a committee to prepare a grammar of Hindi; The committee's report was released in 1958 as *A Basic Grammar of Modern Hindi*.
- standardisation of the orthography, using the Devanagari script, by the Central Hindi Directorate of the Ministry of Education and Culture to bring about uniformity in writing, to improve the shape of some Devanagari characters, and introducing diacritics to express sounds from other languages.

On 14 September 1949, the Constituent Assembly of India adopted Hindi written in the Devanagari script as the official language of the Republic of India replacing Urdu's previous usage in British India.<sup>[32][33][34]</sup> To this end, several stalwarts rallied and lobbied pan-India in favour of Hindi, most notably Beohar Rajendra Simha along with Hazari Prasad Dwivedi, Kaka Kalelkar, Maithili Sharan Gupt and Seth Govind Das who even debated in Parliament on this issue. As such, on the 50th birthday of Beohar Rajendra Simha on 14 September 1949, the efforts came to fruition following the adoption of Hindi as the official language.<sup>[35]</sup> Now, it is celebrated as Hindi Day.<sup>[36]</sup>



## Use outside the Hindi Belt

In Northeast India a pidgin known as Haflong Hindi has developed as a *lingua franca* for the people living in Haflong, Assam who speak other languages natively.<sup>[37]</sup> In Arunachal Pradesh, Hindi emerged as a lingua franca among locals who speak over 50 dialects natively.<sup>[38]</sup>

## Status

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### India

Part XVII of the Indian Constitution deals with the official language of the Indian Commonwealth. Under Article 343, the official languages of the Union has been prescribed, which includes Hindi in Devanagari script and English:

- (1) The official language of the Union shall be Hindi in Devanagari script. The form of numerals to be used for the official purposes of the Union shall be the international form of Indian numerals.<sup>[17]</sup>
- (2) Notwithstanding anything in clause (1), for a period of fifteen years from the commencement of this Constitution, the English language shall continue to be used for all the official purposes of the Union for which it was being used immediately before such commencement: Provided that the President may, during the said period, by order authorise the use of the Hindi language in addition to the English language and of the Devanagari form of numerals in addition to the international form of Indian numerals for any of the official purposes of the Union.<sup>[39]</sup>

Article 351 of the Indian constitution states

It shall be the duty of the Union to promote the spread of the Hindi language, to develop it so that it may serve as a medium of expression for all the elements of the composite culture of India and to secure its enrichment by assimilating without interfering with its genius, the forms, style and expressions used in Hindustani and in the other languages of India specified in the Eighth Schedule, and by drawing, wherever necessary or desirable, for its vocabulary, primarily on Sanskrit and secondarily on other languages.

It was envisioned that Hindi would become the sole working language of the Union Government by 1965 (per directives in Article 344 (2) and Article 351),<sup>[40]</sup> with state governments being free to function in the language of their own choice. However, widespread resistance to the imposition of Hindi on non-native speakers, especially in South India (such as those in Tamil Nadu) led to the passage of the Official Languages Act of 1963, which provided for the continued use of English indefinitely for all official purposes, although the constitutional directive for the Union Government to encourage the spread of Hindi was retained and has strongly influenced its policies.<sup>[41]</sup>

Article 344 (2b) stipulates that official language commission shall be constituted every ten years to recommend steps for progressive use of Hindi language and imposing restrictions on the use of the English language by the union government. In practice, the official language commissions are constantly endeavouring to promote Hindi but not imposing restrictions on English in official use by the union government.

At the state level, Hindi is the official language of the following Indian states: Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Mizoram, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand and West Bengal.<sup>[42][43][44]</sup> Each may also designate a "co-official language"; in Uttar Pradesh, for instance, depending on the political formation in power, this language is generally Urdu. Similarly, Hindi is accorded the status of official language in the following Union Territories: National Capital Territory, Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Dadra and Nagar Haveli.

National language status for Hindi is a long-debated theme.<sup>[45]</sup> In 2010, the Gujarat High Court clarified that Hindi is not the national language of India because the constitution does not mention it as such.<sup>[12][13][46]</sup>

## Outside India

Outside Asia, the Awadhi language (A Hindi dialect) with influence from Bhojpuri, Bihari languages, Fijian and English is spoken in Fiji.<sup>[47][48]</sup> It is an official language in Fiji as per the 1997 Constitution of Fiji,<sup>[49]</sup> where it referred to it as "Hindustani", however in the 2013 Constitution of Fiji, it is simply called "Fiji Hindi".<sup>[50]</sup> It is spoken by 380,000 people in Fiji.<sup>[47]</sup>

Hindi is also spoken by a large population of Madheshis (people having roots in north-India but have migrated to Nepal over hundreds of years) of Nepal. Hindi is quite easy to understand for many Pakistanis, who speak Urdu, which, like Hindi, is part of Hindustani. Apart from this, Hindi is spoken by the large Indian diaspora which hails from, or has its origin from the "Hindi Belt" of India. A substantially large North Indian diaspora lives in countries like the United States of America, the United Kingdom, the United Arab Emirates, Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana, Suriname, South Africa, Fiji and Mauritius, where it is natively spoken at home and among their own Hindustani-speaking communities. Outside India, Hindi speakers are 8 million in Nepal; 863,077 in United States of America;<sup>[51][52]</sup> 450,170 in Mauritius; 380,000 in Fiji;<sup>[47]</sup> 250,292 in South Africa; 150,000 in Suriname;<sup>[53]</sup> 100,000 in Uganda; 45,800 in United Kingdom;<sup>[54]</sup> 20,000 in New Zealand; 20,000 in Germany; 26,000 in Trinidad and Tobago;<sup>[53]</sup> 3,000 in Singapore.

## Comparison with Modern Standard Urdu

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Linguistically, Hindi and Urdu are two registers of the same language and are mutually intelligible.<sup>[55]</sup> Hindi is written in the Devanagari script and uses more Sanskrit words, whereas Urdu is written in the Perso-Arabic script and uses more Arabic and Persian words. Hindi is the most commonly used official language in India. Urdu is the national language and *lingua franca* of Pakistan and is one of 22 official languages of India.

The comparison of Hindi and Urdu as separate languages is largely motivated by politics, namely the Indo-Pakistani rivalry.<sup>[56]</sup>

## Script

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Hindi is written in the Devanagari script, an abugida. Devanagari consists of 11 vowels and 33 consonants and is written from left to right. Unlike for Sanskrit, Devanagari is not entirely phonetic for Hindi, especially failing to mark schwa dropping in spoken Standard Hindi.<sup>[57]</sup>

## Romanization

The Government of India uses Hunterian transliteration as its official system of writing Hindi in the Latin script. Various other systems also exist, such as IAST, ITRANS and ISO 15919.

## Vocabulary

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Traditionally, Hindi words are divided into five principal categories according to their etymology:

- **Tatsam** (तत्सम "same as that") words: These are words which are spelled the same in Hindi as in Sanskrit (except for the absence of final case inflections).<sup>[58]</sup> They include words inherited from Sanskrit via Prakrit which have survived without modification (e.g. Hindi नाम nām / Sanskrit नाम nāma, "name"; Hindi कर्म karm / Sanskrit कर्म karma, "deed, action; karma"),<sup>[59]</sup> as well as forms borrowed directly from Sanskrit in more modern times (e.g. प्रार्थना prārthanā, "prayer").<sup>[60]</sup> Pronunciation, however, conforms to Hindi norms and may differ from that of classical Sanskrit. Amongst nouns, the *tatsam* word could be the Sanskrit non-inflected word-stem, or it could be the nominative singular form in the Sanskrit nominal declension.
- **Ardhatatsam** (अर्धतत्सम "semi-tatsama") words: Such words are typically earlier loanwords from Sanskrit which have undergone sound changes subsequent to being borrowed. (e.g. Hindi सूरज sūraj from Sanskrit सूर्य sūrya)
- **Tadbhav** (तद्भव "born of that") words: These are native Hindi words derived from Sanskrit after undergoing phonological rules (e.g. Sanskrit कर्म karma, "deed" becomes Sauraseni Prakrit कम्म kamma, and eventually Hindi काम kām, "work") and are spelled differently from Sanskrit.<sup>[58]</sup>
- **Deshaj** (देशज) words: These are words that were not borrowings but do not derive from attested Indo-Aryan words either. Belonging to this category are onomatopoetic words or ones borrowed from local non-Indo-Aryan languages.
- **Videshi** (विदेशी "foreign") words: These include all loanwords from non-indigenous languages. The most frequent source languages in this category are Persian, Arabic, English and Portuguese. Examples are कमेटी kameṭī from English committee and साबुन sābun "soap" from Arabic.

Hindi also makes extensive use of loan translation (calqueing) and occasionally phono-semantic matching of English.<sup>[61]</sup>

## Prakrit

Hindi has naturally inherited a large portion of its vocabulary from Śaurasenī Prākṛt, in the form of *tadbhava* words. This process usually involves compensatory lengthening of vowels preceding consonant clusters in Prakrit, e.g. Sanskrit *tīkṣṇa* > Prakrit *tikkha* > Hindi *tīkhā*.

## Sanskrit

Much of Modern Standard Hindi's vocabulary is borrowed from Sanskrit as *tatsam* borrowings, especially in technical and academic fields. The formal Hindi standard, from which much of the Persian, Arabic and English vocabulary has been replaced by neologisms compounding *tatsam* words, is called *Śuddh Hindi* (pure Hindi), and is viewed as a more prestigious dialect over other more colloquial forms of Hindi.

Excessive use of *tatsam* words sometimes creates problems for native speakers. They may have Sanskrit consonant clusters which do not exist in native Hindi, causing difficulties in pronunciation.<sup>[62]</sup>

As a part of the process of Sanskritization, new words are coined using Sanskrit components to be used as replacements for supposedly foreign vocabulary. Usually these neologisms are calques of English words already adopted into spoken Hindi. Some terms such as *dūrbhāṣ* "telephone", literally "far-speech" and *dūrdarśan* "television", literally "far-sight" have even gained some currency in formal Hindi in the place of the English borrowings (*teli*)fon and *tvī*.<sup>[63]</sup>

## Persian

Hindi also features significant Persian influence, standardised from spoken Hindustani.<sup>[64]</sup> Early borrowings, beginning in the mid-12th century, were specific to Islam (e.g. *Muhammad*, *islām*) and so Persian was simply an intermediary for Arabic. Later, under the Delhi Sultanate and Mughal Empire, Persian became the primary administrative language in the Hindi heartland. Persian borrowings reached a heyday in the 17th century, pervading all aspects of life. Even grammatical constructs, namely the izafat, were assimilated into Hindi.<sup>[65]</sup>

Post-Partition the Indian government advocated for a policy of Sanskritization leading to a marginalisation of the Persian element in Hindi. However, many Persian words (e.g. *muškil* "difficult", *bas* "enough", *havā* "air", *x(a)yāl* "thought") have remained entrenched in Modern Standard Hindi, and a larger amount are still used in Urdu poetry written in the Devanagari script.

## Arabic

Arabic also shows influence in Hindi, often via Persian but sometimes directly.<sup>[66]</sup>

## Media

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### Literature

Hindi literature is broadly divided into four prominent forms or styles, being *Bhakti* (devotional – Kabir, Raskhan); *Śringār* (beauty – Keshav, Bihari); *Vigāthā* (epic); and *Ādhunik* (modern).

Medieval Hindi literature is marked by the influence of Bhakti movement and the composition of long, epic poems. It was primarily written in other varieties of Hindi, particularly Avadhi and Braj Bhasha, but to a degree also in Khariboli, the basis for Modern Standard Hindi. During the British Raj, Hindustani became the prestige dialect.

*Chandrakanta*, written by Devaki Nandan Khatri in 1888, is considered the first authentic work of prose in modern Hindi.<sup>[67]</sup> The person who brought realism in the Hindi prose literature was Munshi Premchand, who is considered as the most revered figure in the world of Hindi fiction and progressive movement. Literary, or *Sāhityik*, Hindi was popularised by the writings of Swami Dayananda Saraswati, Bhartendu Harishchandra and others. The rising numbers of newspapers and magazines made Hindustani popular with the educated people.

The *Dvivedī Yug* ("Age of Dwivedi") in Hindi literature lasted from 1900 to 1918. It is named after Mahavir Prasad Dwivedi, who played a major role in establishing Modern Standard Hindi in poetry and broadening the acceptable subjects of Hindi poetry from the traditional ones of religion and romantic love.

In the 20th century, Hindi literature saw a romantic upsurge. This is known as *Chāyāvād* (*shadow-ism*) and the literary figures belonging to this school are known as *Chāyāvādī*. Jaishankar Prasad, Suryakant Tripathi 'Nirala', Mahadevi Varma and Sumitranandan Pant, are the four major *Chāyāvādī* poets.

*Uttar Ādhunik* is the post-modernist period of Hindi literature, marked by a questioning of early trends that copied the West as well as the excessive ornamentation of the *Chāyāvādī* movement, and by a return to simple language and natural themes.

## Internet

The Hindi Wikipedia was the first Indian-language wiki to reach 100,000 articles. Hindi literature, music, and film have all been disseminated via the internet. In 2015, Google reported a 94% increase in Hindi-content consumption year-on-year, adding that 21% of users in India prefer content in Hindi.<sup>[68]</sup> Many Hindi newspapers also offer digital editions.

## Sample text

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The following is a sample text in High Hindi, of the Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (by the United Nations):

### Hindi

अनुच्छेद 1 (एक) – सभी मनुष्यों को गौरव और अधिकारों के विषय में जन्मजात स्वतन्त्रता और समानता प्राप्त है। उन्हें बुद्धि और अन्तरात्मा की देन प्राप्त है और परस्पर उन्हें भाईचारे के भाव से बर्ताव करना चाहिए।

### Transliteration (IAST)

Anucched 1 (ek) – *Sabhī manuṣyō ko gaurav aur adhikārō ke viṣay mē janmajāt svatantratā aur samāntā prāpt hai. Unhē buddhi aur antarātmā kī den prāpt hai aur paraspar unhē bhāīcāre ke bhāv se bartāv karnā cāhie.*

### Transcription (IPA)

[ənʊtʃh:e:d e:k | səb̥i: mənʊʃjō: ko: gɔ:rəʊ ɔ:r əd̥hɪka:rō ke: ma:mle: mē: dʒənmədʒa:t svətəntrəta: ɔ:r səma:nta: pra:pt hɛ: || ʊn̥h̥e bʊd̥h̥:i ɔ:r əntəra:tma: ki: de:n pra:pt hɛ: ɔ:r pərəspər ʊn̥h̥e: b̥h̥a:i:tʃa:re: ke: b̥h̥a:v se: bərtā:v kərnə tʃa:hie: ||]

### Gloss (word-to-word)

Article 1 (one) – All human-beings to dignity and rights' matter in from-birth freedom and equality acquired is. Them to reason and conscience's endowment acquired is and always them to brotherhood's spirit with behaviour to do should.

### Translation (grammatical)

Article 1 – All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

## See also

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- Anti-Hindi agitations of Tamil Nadu
- Bengali Language Movement (Manbhum)
- Hindi Divas – the official day to celebrate Hindi as a language.
- Languages of India and Languages with official status in India
- List of English words of Hindi or Urdu origin
- List of Hindi television channels broadcast in Europe (by country)

- List of Hindi channels in Europe (by type)
- list of Hindi words at Wiktionary, the free dictionary
- List of languages by number of native speakers in India
- List of Sanskrit and Persian roots in Hindi
- World Hindi Secretariat

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## Further reading

- Bhatia, Tej K *A History of the Hindi Grammatical Tradition*. Leiden, Netherlands & New York, NY: E.J. Brill, 1987. ISBN 90-04-07924-6

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